

Testimony for Public Health Committee  
March 5, 2007  
Concerning

**Raised Bill No. 1340 An Act Concerning A Comprehensive Plan to Eradicate Childhood Lead Poisoning**

Good morning Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Committee.

My name is Ronald Kraatz and I am the Director of the LAMPP Lead Poisoning Prevention Project at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. LAMPP implements federal grants to the CT Department of Social Services to abate lead hazards in target housing. I testify in support of Raised Bill No. 1340.

Universal blood lead screening is necessary to protect all of Connecticut's young children. Medical providers are not now testing all children exposed to lead hazards and at risk of lead poisoning. There is considerable variation in the screening rates from town to town and provider to provider. Inevitably, some children poisoned by lead are not identified and helped.

The proposed response by a local director of health to a reported elevated blood lead level would match what the federal Centers for Disease Control recommended 15 years ago. We know now that very low lead levels harm children. Current Connecticut regulations permit directors of health to respond at lower lead levels, but do not require a response. Again, there is variation in practice from town to town. Ordering remediation of identified hazards as proposed is also important.

The proposed Sections 7 and 9 speak to the cost of making housing lead-safe for children. Adding "remediate" to the possible responses required of property owners may appear to be a minor change. IT IS NOT! This change and the regulations that will follow will save some property owners thousands of dollars. Remediation as defined, vs abatement, lowers the cost to make housing lead-safe. Renovation companies with training in lead-safe work practices could do the work at a lower cost than the licensed abatement companies now required. Abatement would still be required where a child has a blood lead level of 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$  or above.

The proposed lead safe account would provide on-going financial assistance to owners who make their property lead-safe. The low-income housing market is difficult at best for both families and owners. Our experience at LAMPP clearly shows the need for such on-going funding if Connecticut is to eradicate childhood lead poisoning.

Finally, Sections 10, 11, and 12 appropriately extend the "remediation" response and application of the lead regulations to other existing statutes.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

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